APPENDIX IV:

THE CURRENT CLAIMS (clean version):

1. (*currently amended*) A process for hydrogen activation of passivated iron useful as catalytically active component after said activation at an elevated pressure, which comprises

   providing a passivated iron catalyst precursor comprising metallic iron, and

   activating said catalyst precursor in the presence of a nitrile at from 20 to 180°C.

2. (*currently amended*) A process as claimed in claim 1, wherein said catalyst precursor is activated at from 2 to 40 MPa.

3. (*previously presented*) A process as claimed claim 1, wherein the nitrile used is an aliphatic nitrile.

4. (*previously presented*) A process as claimed in claim 1, wherein the nitrile used is a compound selected from the group consisting of adiponitrile and 6-aminocapronitrile.

5. (*new*) The process of claim 1, wherein said catalyst precursor comprises metallic iron and optionally one or more constituents selected from the group consisting of: carriers, promoter elements, compounds based on promoter elements, compounds based on alkali metals and compounds based on alkaline earth metals.

6. (*new*) The process of claim 1, wherein the nitrile is employed as a nitrile solution having a nitrile concentration of from 10 to 90% by weight.

7. (*new*) The process of claim 1, wherein said catalyst precursor is employed in an amount of from 1 to 50% by weight, based on the weight of the nitrile.